DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 477 970 CG 032 434

AUTHOR	Cowley, Kimberly S.; Finch, Nicole; Kusimo, Patricia; Keyes, Marian; Poe, Renee
TITLE	School/Community Connections: Evaluation of the Process for Partnering with a Faith-Based Community Organization in West Virginia.
INSTITUTION	AEL, Inc., Charleston, WV.
PUB DATE	2003-06-00
NOTE	60p.
AVAILABLE FROM	AEL, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325. Tel: 800-624-9120 (Toll Free).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*At Risk Persons; Black Youth; *Community Organizations; Data Collection; Evaluation Methods; *Program Evaluation; *School Community Programs; School Community Relationship; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Faith Based Programs

ABSTRACT

AEL's contract with the U.S. Department of Education includes work partnering with faith-based organizations in Kanawha County, West Virginia, to (1) build their capacity to better serve at-risk youth and (2) document what best helps such organizations to successfully impact youth and their families. One of the first faith-based organizations with which AEL became involved on an individual basis was the Helping Others Pursue Excellence (HOPE) Youth Development Movement. Work undertaken with the HOPE program during 2002 has served as a pilot test of the types of data collection methods and instruments needed to document the impact of AEL's involvement with faith-based organizations serving African American youth. This evaluation report of the process for partnering with a faith-based organization serves as documentation of the pilot test of the instruments and provides the baseline data for the HOPE program. The primary audiences for this report include AEL staff, U.S. Department of Education staff, and HOPE staff. Secondary audiences include staff of other faith-based organizations interested in promoting such partnerships within their communities. Appendixes include a description of HOPE programs, a completed evaluation standards checklist, interview protocols, the AEL Skills Inventory, and a satisfaction survey. (GCP)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 477 970

School/Community Connections: Evaluation of the Process for Partnering with a Faith-Based Community Organization in West Virginia

Kimberly S. Cowley, Nicole Finch,
Patricia Kusimo, Marian Keyes, Renee Poe

June 2003

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. BERRY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

AEL
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325

CG032434

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

School/Community Connections: Evaluation of the Process for Partnering with a Faith-Based Community Organization in West Virginia

Kimberly S. Cowley, Nicole Finch,
Patricia Kusimo, Marian Keyes, Renee Poe

June 2003

AEL
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325

AEL is a not-for-profit corporation that applies the latest education research and technology to spark innovation and promote strategies for student success. AEL delivers products and services that integrate research and development, evaluation, professional development, technology, and diverse perspectives. AEL operates several contracts funded by the U.S. Department of Education: a Regional Educational Laboratory, the Region IV Comprehensive Center, an Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education, and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Information about AEL research, products, and services is available by writing P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325; calling 304-347-0400 or 800-624-9120; or visiting www.ael.org.

Copyright © 2003 by AEL
Reproduction of this document is permitted provided credit is given to AEL as the source.

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, under contract number ED-01-CO-0016. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of IES, the Department, or any other agency of the U.S. government.

AEL is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY iii

INTRODUCTION 1

- Purpose of Report 2
- HOPE Description 2

METHODS 4

- Evaluation Questions 4
- Instrumentation 5
- Data Collection 9
- Data Analyses 10

FINDINGS 11

- Summaries by Instrument 11
  - Faith-Based Staff Interviews 11
  - Student Interviews 13
  - Parent Interviews 14
  - Staff Reflections on Lessons Learned 15
  - Student Records 17
  - AEL Skills Inventory 21
  - Satisfaction Survey 23
- Summaries by Research Question 28
  - Question One 28
  - Question Two 28
  - Question Three 29

CONCLUSIONS 30

RECOMMENDATIONS 31

REFERENCES 32

APPENDIXES

- A: Description of HOPE Programs
- B: Completed Evaluation Standards Checklist
- C: Interview Protocols
- D: AEL Skills Inventory
- E: Satisfaction Survey

LIST OF TABLES

1: Matrix of Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Strategies 5

2: Subscale Items and Alpha Reliability Coefficients for Summer 2002 Administration of the AEL Skills Inventory 7

3: Descriptive Statistics for HOPE Students Fall 2001 Subject Grades by Gender and Race 19

4: Descriptive Statistics for AEL Skills Inventory Subscales 21

5: Results of One-Way ANOVAS by Gender for AEL Skills Inventory Subscales 22

6: Number and Percent of Students by Administration for Satisfaction Survey 23

7: Descriptive Statistics by Administration for Satisfaction Survey 25

8: Summary of What Students Liked Most About HOPE by Administration 27

9: Summary of What Students Liked Least About HOPE by Administration 27

LIST OF FIGURES

1: Fall 2001 Subject Grades for HOPE Students by Gender and Race 20

2: Mean Scores for AEL Skills Inventory Subscales by Gender 22

3: Percentage of HOPE Services Received by Students 24

4: Mean Scores for Satisfaction Survey Items by Administration 25

5: Percent of Agreement for Satisfaction Survey Items by Administration 26

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2001, AEL was re-funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. One emphasis of the contract is "School/Community Connections." One strategy encompassed by the funded scope of work is partnering with faith-based organizations in Kanawha County, West Virginia, to (1) build their capacity to better serve at-risk youth and (2) document what best helps such organizations to successfully impact youth and their families.

In 2001, AEL's school/community work focused on helping to form a coalition of African American faith-based organizations in Charleston, called the Partnership of African American Churches (PAAC), that could collaborate to bring about systemic impact on the education of at-risk youth. However, after nearly a year of extensive support from AEL, it became apparent that community issues beyond those in AEL's purview (such as senior citizen health) and insufficient ownership by PAAC members were hindering this group from focusing on supporting at-risk youth. Hence, the focus of AEL's faith-based strategy changed in 2002 from working collectively to working individually with grassroots organizations with youth programs focused on improving the academic achievement of high-risk and at-risk youth.

One of the first faith-based organizations with which AEL became involved on an individual basis was the Helping Others Pursue Excellence (HOPE) Youth Development Movement. AEL project staff have been involved with the HOPE program during 2002 by providing external facilitation and technical assistance, such as refining record-keeping systems; developing intake and tracking systems; establishing linkages to other agencies and services; facilitating meetings; developing materials; and providing training, capacity building, data collection, evaluation services, program design, and research on best practices.

Work undertaken with the HOPE program during 2002 has served as a pilot test of the types of data collection methods and instruments needed to document the impact of AEL's involvement with faith-based organizations serving African American youth. This evaluation report of the process for partnering with a faith-based organization serves as documentation of the pilot test of the instruments and provides the baseline data for the HOPE program. The primary audiences for this report include AEL staff, U.S. Department of Education staff, and HOPE staff. Secondary audiences include staff of other faith-based organizations interested in promoting such partnerships within their communities.

Description of HOPE

The HOPE Community Development Corporation began as a grassroots organization in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1994, and was formally established as a nonprofit faith-based organization in 1997. HOPE is a holistic, comprehensive, and integrated youth development system with linkages and support from Kanawha County schools, Kanawha County Juvenile and Criminal Justice systems, higher education, and community and faith-based organizations. The program operates in 8 high schools, 13 middle schools, and 4 elementary schools, serving more than 400 youth. HOPE currently operates a number of programs ranging from tutoring and

mentoring to youth health initiatives and career planning. It also operates as the service provider for the Kanawha County in-school youth component for the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998.

Although HOPE services are comprehensive and integrated across grade levels, HOPE and AEL staff decided to focus collaborative work and documentation only at the high school level. Reasons for this included the closer relationships and access HOPE staff had with schools at the secondary level, the comprehensive array of services available through WIA, and the fact that the WIA program was just coming to fruition and served as a natural starting point for an in-depth look at program outcomes.

Evaluation Plan

Three main questions frame the work currently underway in the faith-based initiative: (1) What types of technical assistance are needed to help build the capacity of faith-based organizations to design and implement programs that support and nurture the educational attainment of youth, especially high-risk and at-risk youth? (2) What impact does participation in an educational or social program run by a faith-based organization have on high-risk or at-risk youths' overall educational experience (i.e., academic achievement, attendance, attitude toward learning, behavior)? (3) To what degree and in what ways are faith-based organizations able to engage family members of youth involved in their programs in activities that support the academic achievement of youth?

To address these questions, AEL evaluators constructed a multiple-method evaluation design that addresses both process and outcomes through a case study of a faith-based organization. Given that AEL had worked with the HOPE program for the longest period of time, it was selected to serve as the case study site. The evaluation plan calls for data to be collected during a baseline year and each year thereafter that the project is funded at AEL. The baseline year for HOPE data collection was 2002. Methods include interviewing faith-based staff, students, and parents; gathering reflections of AEL staff; administering the AEL Skills Inventory survey and a Satisfaction survey to students; and compiling student record data.

In order to comply fully with regulations pertaining to protection of human subjects, a signed Informed Consent Form was secured from a parent of each student who participated in any interview or survey data collection activities. Further, a signed memo of authorization from the HOPE administrator was secured before any student record data were provided to AEL.

Data Collection

AEL staff conducted a group interview with all six HOPE staff members in October 2002, an individual interview with the HOPE administrator in October 2002, two group interviews with a total of eight students in June and July 2002, and seven individual parent interviews in November 2002. In December 2002, the three AEL project staff provided written narratives of their involvement with the faith-based organization, including their perceptions of successes and failures, lessons learned, and issues for future consideration. During the fall of 2002, HOPE staff provided AEL staff with student record data for the 2001-2002 school year.

These data included student identification numbers, letter grades for subjects by nine-week periods, gender and ethnicity information, and (in some cases) attendance information for 174 students. Data were merged into a SPSS file, which was used for all subsequent analyses. Analyses focus on within-semester grade differences and differences by gender and race.

AEL staff provided photocopies of the AEL Skills Inventory (a self-report assessment tool) to HOPE staff, who distributed the survey to participating youth during the summer of 2002. A total of 174 surveys out of approximately 300 were completed and returned to AEL staff in the fall of 2002 (about 58% response rate). These survey data were scanned into files that were then exported to SPSS for statistical analysis. The Satisfaction survey was administered to HOPE participants twice—once in the summer of 2002 and again in November 2002. For the first administration, the survey was photocopied as the fourth page of the AEL Skills Inventory; a total of 174 completed surveys were returned out of the 300 (58% response rate). For the second administration, HOPE staff distributed the single-page survey in November 2002; at this time, the total number distributed is unknown. A total of 119 completed surveys were returned to AEL staff. These survey data were scanned into files that were then exported to SPSS for statistical analysis.

Findings

Results from the pilot-test administration of the data collection instruments at the HOPE Youth Development Movement are presented in two summary forms in the findings section of this report. First, to demonstrate the full extent of the data gathered, individual summaries are presented by each type of instrument. Second, to frame the findings around the evaluation questions, a summary is presented that links findings from specific methods to each question. While the findings by individual instrument are informative, they are quite lengthy; therefore, only the summary by evaluation questions is provided below.

(1) What types of technical assistance are needed to help build the capacity of faith-based organizations to design and implement programs that support and nurture the educational attainment of youth, especially high-risk and at-risk youth?

Through AEL staff reflections, a variety of technical assistance strategies to help build the capacity of faith-based organizations were noted. Staff also noted that training in grant writing helps such organizations develop programs to generate income to sustain their services. Similarly, sound evaluation practices are a key part of any successful grant, and AEL can provide expertise in this area. A third area of technical assistance is leadership development. According to staff reflections, many faith-based staff and/or volunteers are unaccustomed to serving in leadership roles; such assistance could help these workers become more comfortable in this capacity.

Interviews with HOPE staff by AEL evaluators revealed perceptions of AEL's technical assistance as high quality with "organizational intelligence" to understand the importance of research-based curriculum and activity, measurable goals and objectives, and accurate data collection. HOPE staff viewed AEL's assistance as helpful and valuable, and deemed it to be a great asset.

To help other faith-based organizations design and implement programs, HOPE staff suggested that such organizations must first have a clear vision of what they desire to accomplish in terms of helping youth. They also noted that patience was critical, i.e., a focus on the long term because measurable improvements take time. Further, HOPE staff noted that AEL could provide assistance with record keeping, legal issues and/or paperwork, and identification of funding opportunities.

Several suggestions from HOPE staff for improving AEL's technical assistance services included continued learning about and understanding of grassroots community-level issues and how community organizations operate, and more involvement of AEL staff in school-site activities.

(2) What impact does participation in an educational or social program run by a faith-based organization have on high-risk or at-risk youths' overall educational experience (i.e., academic achievement, attendance, attitude toward learning, behavior)?

Student interviewees told AEL evaluators of HOPE's positive impact on their academic progress and their self-esteem, but inspection of academic records did not support these perceptions. Students noted the individualized emphasis they received, and their perceptions that HOPE staff were truly interested in helping each child. In fact, the one topic most frequently mentioned as most liked about HOPE was the caring, committed staff.

On average, HOPE students had grades of B or C in each of the four subjects studied, with higher grades in math than in English, history, or science. Students' math and science grades dropped significantly from the first to second nine-week period, yet effect sizes were minimal. And, while grades did drop from the first to second nine weeks, they were still well within the passing range. However, Black males consistently fared worse grade-wise for all four subjects for both grading periods.

Students' scores on the self-report AEL Skills Inventory ranged for the most part from 3.5 to 4.0 (maximum score = 5) for each of seven behavioral areas (confidence, written communications, oral communications, values, decision making, problem solving, and planning), indicating that they felt mostly positive about actions pertaining to each area.

In terms of satisfaction with HOPE services and the impact the program had on their lives, about three fourths of the students completing the Satisfaction survey indicated they were satisfied with the extent to which the HOPE services met their needs and positively impacted their lives. About two thirds indicated they were satisfied with new skills or knowledge they had gained and their spiritual growth.

(3) To what degree and in what ways are faith-based organizations able to engage family members of youth involved in their programs in activities that support the academic achievement of youth?

At this point in time, HOPE staff believed that family involvement in their program was less than satisfactory, based on interviews conducted by AEL evaluators. HOPE staff

interviewees mentioned that multiple siblings often participated in the program, but that parent involvement was lacking. They noted that activities were open to all family members, yet felt that most parents turned to HOPE only in a crisis situation. Further, HOPE staff also reported that even though parents seemed to support the program, they didn't seem to fully understand the comprehensive array of services.

Student data corroborated staff's perceptions, with few students noting active parent participation, according to student interviews conducted by AEL evaluators. Students thought parents supported their participation passively (i.e., through encouragement for attending) rather than actively (i.e., by becoming involved and attending activities). Finally, in interviews conducted by AEL evaluators, parents themselves indicated almost no active involvement in HOPE activities and few indicated that they actually understood the program fully.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this evaluation.

- The data collection instruments seem to provide a comprehensive picture of a faith-based organization's youth program. The mixed-method approach of surveys, interviews, reflections, and academic records provides a triangulation of data that compensates for any inherent weaknesses in a particular collection strategy.

- The various collection methods do not seem overly burdensome to faith-based staff or overly intrusive to participants. Data were collected in a timely manner, once AEL and HOPE staff were able to coordinate their schedules. However, there were difficulties encountered in identifying sufficient numbers of students and parents willing to be interviewed.

- One area that seems to have been left untapped is the perceptions of faith-based staff in terms of their communication and collaboration with their community schools. The interview protocols did not include any mention of this aspect.

- It seems that the time is ripe, with the conclusion of this report, to work closely with HOPE staff in building their capacity for evaluative activities, interpretations, and utilization. HOPE staff willingly shared all requested data and have seemed most appreciative of the evaluation assistance received to date.

- It also seems apparent, given AEL staff and HOPE staff input, that AEL's future work with HOPE staff could focus on capacity building in the areas of leadership development and training in grant writing so that HOPE staff can sustain current services.

- On average, HOPE students earned Cs in English, history, and science, and Bs in math. However, students' math and science grades dropped significantly from the first to second nine-week period. Further, Black males consistently fared worse grade-wise for all four subjects for both grading periods.

- HOPE students report feeling positive about their actions and attitudes related to confidence, written communications, oral communications, values, decision making, problem solving, and planning.

- HOPE students report that the HOPE services are adequately meeting their needs and positively impacting their lives. They show less satisfaction with knowledge or skills gained from their participation in the HOPE program or spiritual growth.

- There seems to be a discrepancy regarding academic improvement as a result of HOPE participation. Two thirds of the students indicated they were satisfied with their academic improvements and interviewees noted the academic benefits of such participation, yet students' grades did decline in four subject areas across grading periods.

Recommendations

Given the conclusions noted previously, several recommendations are suggested for improving any future data collection efforts.

- AEL project and evaluation staff need to work closely with faith-based staff to strategize ways to promote more participation (number and depth) of both students and parents in future group interviews. Perhaps one such strategy might be to schedule an evening interview, with dinner provided, so that parents and students could attend and participate without feeling pressured to skip or rush through the interview.

- AEL could consider tailoring future technical assistance to HOPE staff toward training in grant writing and leadership, if HOPE staff are receptive to this suggestion and willing to work on these endeavors.

- The interview protocol for faith-based staff should be modified to include questions pertaining to their perceptions of school communication/collaboration.

- HOPE staff may want to investigate possible causes for students' grade declines across grading periods. And, they may consider monitoring students' grades more closely by grading periods, to try to intervene as necessary to avoid such declines. Further, they may want to intensify their tutoring activities with Black males, given their consistently lower grades.

INTRODUCTION

In 2001, AEL was re-funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. One emphasis of the contract is "School/Community Connections." While communities and schools have a common interest in helping children develop into productive citizens, few schools and communities work collaboratively on behalf of children, particularly African American children (AEL, 2000; Kusimo, 1999).

One strategy encompassed by the funded scope of work is partnering with faith-based organizations in Kanawha County, West Virginia, to (1) build their capacity to better serve at-risk youth and (2) document what best helps such organizations to successfully impact youth and their families.

In 2001, AEL's school/community work focused on helping to form a coalition of African American faith-based organizations in Charleston that could collaborate to bring about systemic impact on the education of at-risk youth. AEL staff did the preliminary planning and introductions, convened the group, provided meeting space, facilitated meetings, and provided technical assistance to support the group. Called the Partnership of African American Churches (PAAC), this group formed a nonprofit corporation, named officers, and met throughout the year as it endeavored to coalesce into a more powerful force than members would have been individually.

However, after nearly a year of extensive support from AEL, it became apparent that community issues beyond those in AEL's purview (such as senior citizen health) and insufficient ownership by PAAC members were hindering this group from focusing on supporting at-risk youth. Hence, the focus of AEL's faith-based strategy changed in 2002 from working collectively to working individually with grassroots organizations with youth programs focused on improving the academic achievement of high-risk and at-risk youth. AEL staff used Schorr's (1998) "Seven Attributes of Highly Effective Programs" as a framework for identifying specific faith-based organizations with which to collaborate. According to Schorr, successful programs (1) are comprehensive, flexible, responsive, and persevering; (2) see children in the context of their families; (3) deal with families as parts of neighborhoods and communities; (4) have a long-term, preventive orientation, a clear mission, and continue to evolve over time; (5) are well managed by competent and committed individuals with clearly identifiable skills; (6) have staff that are trained and supported to provide high-quality, responsive services; and (7) operate in settings that encourage practitioners to build strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

One of the first faith-based organizations with which AEL became involved on an individual basis was the Helping Others Pursue Excellence (HOPE) Youth Development Movement. AEL project staff have been involved with the HOPE program during 2002 by providing external facilitation and technical assistance, such as refining record-keeping systems; developing intake and tracking systems; establishing linkages to other agencies and services; facilitating meetings; developing materials; and providing training, capacity building, data

collection, evaluation services, program design, and research on best practices. AEL staff subsequently began collaborations with seven other faith-based organizations: Covenant Christian Fellowship Church, First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Kanawha Institute for Social Research and Action, New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church, Rimson Memorial Church of God in Christ, and Simpson United Methodist Church.

Purpose of Report

Work undertaken with the HOPE program during 2002 has served as a pilot test of the types of data collection methods and instruments needed to document the impact of AEL's involvement with faith-based organizations serving African American youth. This evaluation report of the process for partnering with a faith-based organization serves as documentation of the pilot test of the instruments and provides the baseline data for the HOPE program. The primary audiences for this report include AEL staff, U.S. Department of Education staff, and HOPE staff. Secondary audiences include staff of other faith-based organizations interested in promoting such partnerships within their communities.

HOPE Description

The HOPE Community Development Corporation began as a grassroots organization in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1994, and was formally established as a nonprofit faith-based organization in 1997. The HOPE Youth Development Movement is a holistic, comprehensive, and integrated youth development system with linkages and support from Kanawha County schools, the Kanawha County Juvenile and Criminal Justice systems, higher education, and community and faith-based organizations. Within Kanawha County, the program operates in 8 high schools, 13 middle schools, and 4 elementary schools, serving more than 400 youth. HOPE currently operates a number of programs ranging from tutoring and mentoring to youth health initiatives and career planning. See Appendix A for a complete listing and description of current programs.

HOPE also operates as the service provider for the Kanawha County in-school youth component for the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. This act mandated that states develop local Workforce Investment Boards to provide education and job training services to adults, dislocated workers, and youth (both in-school and out-of-school) through One-Stop systems. Participating youth must be low-income and ages 14 to 21 (although up to 5% who are not low-income may receive services if they face certain barriers to school completion or employment). They must also face one or more of the following challenges: (1) a school dropout; (2) a basic literacy skills deficiency; (3) a homeless, runaway, or foster child; (4) pregnant or a parent; (5) an offender; or (6) in need of help completing an education program or securing and holding a job.

One service HOPE provides is a stipend that youth may earn on a nine-week basis (maximum of $40 per month) during the school year. This incentive is used to encourage students to stay in school, participate in HOPE activities, and avoid negative behaviors. Deductions are taken if certain criteria are not met within the grading period. Such criteria include no school disciplinary referrals, no suspensions, not more than three absences, participation in all mandatory HOPE activities and at least one optional HOPE activity per month, participation in at least one tutoring session per week if less than a 3.0 grade point average, no HOPE disciplinary referrals, and showing their report cards to HOPE staff.

Although HOPE services are comprehensive and integrated across grade levels, HOPE and AEL staff decided to focus collaborative work and documentation only at the high school level. Reasons for this included the closer relationships and access HOPE staff had with schools at the secondary level, the comprehensive array of services available through WIA, and the fact that the WIA program was just coming to fruition and served as a natural starting point for an in-depth look at program outcomes.

METHODS

Evaluation Questions

Three main questions frame the work currently underway in the faith-based initiative:

1. What types of technical assistance are needed to help build the capacity of faith-based organizations to design and implement programs that support and nurture the educational attainment of youth, especially high-risk and at-risk youth?

2. What impact does participation in an educational or social program run by a faith-based organization have on high-risk or at-risk youths' overall educational experience (i.e., academic achievement, attendance, attitude toward learning, behavior)?

3. To what degree and in what ways are faith-based organizations able to engage family members of youth involved in their programs in activities that support the academic achievement of youth?

To address these questions, AEL evaluators constructed a multiple-method evaluation design that includes both process and outcomes through a case study of a faith-based organization. Given that AEL had worked with HOPE for the longest period of time, it was selected to serve as the case study site. This design includes four attributes necessary for evaluating complex interventions (Schorr, 1998): (1) a strong theoretical/conceptual base, (2) an emphasis on shared interests rather than adversarial relationships between agencies, (3) use of multiple methods, and (4) a rigorous and relevant design. Specific data collection strategies are described below for each question. The evaluation plan calls for data to be collected during a baseline year and each year thereafter that the project is funded at AEL. The baseline year for HOPE data collection was 2002.

Methods for addressing these evaluation questions include interviewing faith-based staff, students, and parents; gathering reflections of AEL project staff; administering the AEL Skills Inventory survey and a Satisfaction survey to students; and compiling student record data, including achievement data. Table 1 provides a matrix that aligns the three questions with specific data collection strategies. These data collection procedures are described at length in the following Instrumentation section.

AEL evaluators worked during 2002 to develop the draft data collection instruments, i.e., interview protocols and surveys. All instruments have been developed, reviewed, and pilot tested with the HOPE program and reviewed by AEL's Institutional Review Board for protection of human subjects. Further, the evaluation has been aligned with *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994); see Appendix B for a completed checklist.

Table 1: Matrix of Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Strategies

Data Collection Strategies	Evaluation Questions		
	(1) What types of technical assistance are needed to help build the capacity of faith-based organizations to design and implement programs that support and nurture the educational attainment of youth, especially high-risk and at-risk youth?	(2) What impact does participating in an educational or social program run by a faith-based organization have on high-risk or at-risk youths' overall educational experience (i.e., academic achievement, attendance, attitude toward learning, behavior)?	(3) To what degree and in what ways are faith-based organizations able to engage family members of youth involved in their programs in activities that support the academic achievement of youth?
Faith-based staff interviews	✓		✓
Student interviews		✓	✓
Parent interviews			✓
AEL Skills Inventory		✓	
Satisfaction survey		✓	
AEL project staff reflections	✓		
Student records, inc. achievement data		✓	

Instrumentation

Interview protocols. Three protocols have been developed for use with faith-based staff, participating youth, and parents of involved youth. The staff protocol includes 10 questions that focus on a description of the youth program and staff involvement, main strengths and weaknesses of the program, differences from other programs, involvement of family members, suggestions for improvement, value of AEL's involvement, and needed technical assistance for other faith-based organizations implementing similar programs. The student protocol includes 10 questions that focus on how they became involved in the youth program, types of activities in which they participate, how the program operates, main strengths and weaknesses of the program, benefits gained from participation, differences from other programs, involvement of their family members, suggestions for improvement, and other comments. The parent protocol contains 8 questions that focus on how their child became involved in the youth program, how the program operates, types of activities, main strengths and weaknesses of the program, benefits gained from participation, differences from other programs, and suggestions for improvement. See Appendix C for copies of the interview protocols.

AEL staff reflections on lessons learned. One key part of this documentation is the perceptions and reflections of the three involved AEL project staff and what they have learned to date. With their constant involvement in day-to-day activities and conversations, they have an

understanding of how they have worked with faith-based organizations to develop and/or implement programs that positively impact at-risk youth. For this pilot test, AEL project staff provided a written narrative of their involvement with the faith-based organization, including their perceptions of successes and failures, lessons learned, and issues for future consideration.

Student record data. Each faith-based organization keeps student records of relevant school-indicator data (i.e., grades, attendance, disciplinary referrals) and data related to its specific program. AEL evaluators utilized that data from HOPE in this report.

AEL Skills Inventory. This self-report survey contains 70 items that focus on skills youth may or may not possess. Adapted primarily from the Leadership Skills Inventory (Karnes & Chauvin, 1985), the survey contains seven 10-item scales: confidence, written communications, oral communications, values, decision making, problem solving, and planning. Students respond to each item by rating their feelings on a 5-point scale of Almost Never (1) to Almost Always (5). This instrument was used to document baseline attitudinal and behavioral attributes and will be re-administered yearly to measure changes. A unique identification number is generated on the survey, so individual student comparisons can be made in subsequent analyses. This survey was printed on one sheet of 11 x 17 perforated paper, folded in half. The back page was devoted to the Satisfaction survey (described next). See Appendix D for a copy of this inventory.

To assess the degree to which items measure the same construct (internal consistency), Cronbach alpha reliability estimates were computed for this set of respondent scores. At .97, the coefficient was deemed to be very satisfactory for this type of instrument; the coefficient was also .97 for both males and females. At the subscale level, the coefficients ranged from .84 to 92 for the full group; from .81 to .91 for females; and from .82 to .93 for males. See Table 2 for subscale Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for all students and by gender, as well as a listing of the items that make up each subscale.

Satisfaction survey. This survey provides the faith-based organization with student perceptions that are based directly on services provided. It asks students to identify their school (for use by the faith-based organization), then to select from a list of 14 options all of the activities in which they participated during the past year in the youth program. Possible activities include character education, field trips, postsecondary education awareness, youth entrepreneurship training, WIA initiative, alternative sentencing, transition/re-entry, tutoring/mentoring, career awareness, college preparation, abstinence education, job referral, intervention for juvenile offenders, and truancy diversion. Students then are asked to rate their satisfaction with eight items, such as quality and appropriateness of services, extent to which needs were met, and spiritual and academic growth, using a 5-point scale of Very Dissatisfied (1) to Very Satisfied (5). The last two questions are open-ended and ask students to identify what they like most and least about the program. See Appendix E for a copy of this survey.

To assess the internal consistency, Cronbach alpha reliability estimates were computed for both the summer and fall 2002 sets of respondent scores for the eight satisfaction items. For both administrations, the coefficients were deemed to be very satisfactory, at .93 and .92.

Table 2: Subscale Items and Alpha Reliability Coefficients for Summer 2002 Administration of the AEL Skills Inventory

Subscale Name	Alpha Coefficient	Items
Confidence	.84 for full group .81 for females .87 for males	1. I am entitled to my own opinion. 2. I can state my opinion when others disagree. 3. I can identify my weaknesses. 4. I can accept constructive criticism. 5. I feel comfortable in most situations. 6. I can take a stand when the going gets rough. 7. I like to face my problems head on. 8. I can resist when other people impose on me. 9. I can insist that others respect my rights. 10. I can identify my strengths.
Written Communications	.88 for full group .91 for females .82 for males	11. I can write my ideas so others understand them. 12. I can distinguish fact from opinion in writing. 13. I can compare and contrast ideas in writing. 14. I can summarize written information. 15. I know how to use written information. 16. I can write to persuade others to my viewpoint. 17. I can write a speech. 18. I can evaluate my writing. 19. I can prepare an agenda for a meeting. 20. I can write an outline.
Oral Communications	.90 for full group .89 for females .91 for males	21. I can speak in a clear manner. 22. I can express a group's ideas. 23. I can orally defend my viewpoint. 24. I can deliver a prepared speech to a group. 25. I can moderate panel discussions. 26. I can use effective body language as I speak. 27. I am sincere when speaking. 28. I can deliver a speech spontaneously. 29. I can tell others how I feel. 30. I can effectively listen to others.
Values	.91 for full group .83 for females .92 for males	31. I have a set of personal standards. 32. I recognize the important things in my life. 33. I am loyal to those closest to me. 34. I can accept other people's ideas. 35. I do what I say I will. 36. I try to deal honestly with others. 37. I can accept other people's values. 38. I try to respect the feelings of others. 39. I understand my own feelings. 40. I treat other people fairly.

Table 2 (continued)

Subscale Name	Alpha Coefficient	Items
Decision Making	.90 for full group .87 for females .91 for males	41. I can gather facts for decision making. 42. I can analyze facts before making a decision. 43. I am aware of how my decisions affect others. 44. I know how to reach logical conclusions. 45. I can reach decisions on my own. 46. I can accept that my decisions may not be popular. 47. I can support group decisions, even if I don't agree. 48. I can make accurate decisions quickly. 49. I understand decision making skills. 50. I can accept advice from others.
Problem Solving	.92 for full group .91 for females .92 for males	51. I know the elements of problem solving. 52. I know what to do as a leader in solving problems. 53. I can identify a problem. 54. I can develop different ways to solve problems. 55. I can select the best way to solve a problem. 56. I can judge how effective my strategy is. 57. I can make people feel safe expressing their ideas. 58. I can resolve conflicts within a group. 59. I can work effectively for a compromise. 60. I can distinguish between influence and manipulation.
Planning	.91 for full group .86 for females .93 for males	61. I have organizational skills. 62. I set reachable goals for myself. 63. I seek advice when necessary. 64. I can tell what is needed to accomplish goals. 65. I can set realistic deadlines. 66. I can accept change. 67. I can meet deadlines. 68. I can determine whether goals are completed. 69. I am not overwhelmed by details. 70. I can set objectives to help achieve my goals.

Protection of human subjects. In order to comply fully with these regulations, a signed Informed Consent Form was secured from a parent of each student who participated in any interview or survey data collection activities. Further, a signed memo of authorization from the HOPE administrator was secured before any student record data were provided to AEL.

Data Collection

Interviews. All six HOPE staff were interviewed in October 2002. An AEL evaluator conducted a group interview of the six staff members at the HOPE site, and then individually interviewed the HOPE administrator. AEL evaluators also conducted two group interviews of a convenience sample of high school students participating in the HOPE program. HOPE staff identified these students and secured their willingness to participate. The first group interview took place on June 25, 2002, with three participants. Given the low number of participants, a second group interview with students took place on July 19, 2002, with five participants. Both interviews took place at the HOPE site. While it was not possible to bring together a group of parents at one time and central location for this baseline data collection, an AEL evaluator spent a Saturday in November 2002 at the HOPE site as parents brought their children in to pick up their HOPE stipend checks. As parents entered the office, they were asked by HOPE staff if they would be willing to participate in a short individual interview about their perceptions of the HOPE program. Seven parents agreed to be interviewed.

AEL staff reflections on lessons learned. For this evaluation, the three involved AEL project staff provided written narratives of their involvement with the faith-based organization, including their perceptions of successes and failures, lessons learned, and issues for future consideration. These narratives were completed in December 2002 and were then summarized by AEL evaluators and merged into one comprehensive section of this report.

Student records. During the fall of 2002, HOPE staff provided AEL evaluators with student record data for the 2001-2002 school year in two formats: an Access database and a paper file. The database included student identification numbers, letter grades for subjects by nine-week periods, and (in some cases) attendance information for 174 students (no standardized achievement data were provided). The paper file contained gender and ethnicity information for each student by identification number. These data were merged into a SPSS data file, which was used for all subsequent analyses. Given the varying ages, races, and socioeconomic status of students participating in the HOPE program, it was not possible to establish a representative control group. Analyses focus on within-semester grade differences and differences by gender and race.

AEL Skills Inventory. AEL evaluators provided photocopies of this survey to HOPE staff, who distributed the survey to participating youth during the summer of 2002. Out of approximately 300 surveys, a total of 174 were completed and returned to AEL in the fall of 2002 (about 58% response rate). These survey data were scanned into files that were then exported to SPSS for statistical analysis.

Satisfaction survey. This survey was administered to HOPE participants twice—once in the summer of 2002 and again in November 2002. For the first administration, the survey was photo-copied as the fourth page of the AEL Skills Inventory. As noted above, a total of 174 completed surveys were returned. For the second administration, HOPE staff distributed the single-page survey to students on a Saturday in November as they arrived to pick up their stipend checks. A total of 119 completed surveys were returned to AEL; at this time, the total number distributed is unknown. These survey data were scanned into files that were then exported to SPSS for statistical analysis.

Data Analyses

Interviews. All interview data from the three groups (HOPE staff, parents, and participating youth) were analyzed in the same manner. Interview notes were first typed and edited for clarity. Then, summaries were prepared for each group of interviews (i.e., staff, parents, and youth) by AEL evaluators. Common themes emerging from individual responses were identified in each summary. Data were summarized in a narrative format.

AEL staff reflections on lessons learned. The three involved AEL project staff were asked to provide quasi-structured narratives that, in general, focused on perceived successes and failures, lessons learned, and issues for future consideration. All three provided these narratives, which AEL evaluators reviewed and synthesized into one comprehensive summary.

Student records. Students' grades (A, B, C, D, or F) for English, math, science, and history were converted to a numeric scale (F = 0 through A = 4) using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (number, mean, standard deviation) were calculated for each subject. General Linear Model (GLM) repeated measures Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences between students' first and second nine-week grades and by a grouping of gender and race (Black males, Black females, White males, White females) for each subject. The alpha level for detecting significant differences was set at a traditional .05 level and Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses were utilized for pinpointing any significant differences among the four gender/race groups. The partial eta squared method for calculating effect sizes was generated via SPSS for any significant ANOVAs. Data were summarized via narrative text, tables, and figures.

AEL Skills Inventory. Using SPSS, each set of items that comprised a subscale was added together and divided by the total number of items (10) to create subscale mean scores. Descriptive statistics (number, mean, standard deviation) were calculated for each of the seven subscales. One-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences by grade level or gender for each subscale. The alpha level for detecting significant differences was set at a traditional .05 level and Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses were utilized for pinpointing any significant differences by grade level. Cohen's *d* method was used to manually calculate effect sizes for any significant ANOVAs. Data were summarized via narrative text, tables, and figures.

Satisfaction survey. SPSS was utilized to analyze these survey data. Response percentages and descriptive statistics (number, mean, standard deviation) were calculated for survey items, as appropriate. One-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences by administration for eight items pertaining to the HOPE services they had received. The alpha level for detecting significant differences was set at a traditional .05 level. Cohen's *d* method was used to manually calculate effect sizes for any significant ANOVAs. Data were summarized via narrative text, tables, and figures.

FINDINGS

Findings from the pilot-test administration of the data collection instruments at the HOPE Youth Development Movement are presented in two summary forms. First, to demonstrate the full extent of the data gathered, individual summaries are presented by each type of instrument. Second, to frame the findings around the evaluation questions, a summary is presented that links findings from specific methods to each question.

Summaries by Instrument

Faith-Based Staff Interviews

A group interview of all six HOPE staff members plus an individual interview with the HOPE administrator were conducted at the HOPE office in October 2002. Staff were first asked to describe the HOPE program. One staff member described HOPE as a "holistic, comprehensive youth development system." Another said it was a system designed to provide assistance to youth in areas of academics, preparation for postsecondary education, and entry into the workforce. HOPE's approach was described as a customized strategy to deal with each youth as an individual. Staff also noted that HOPE provides other services to low-income youth and families, including referrals for education and employment, tutoring, acting as an advocate for families with the court system, and referring families to debt management agencies. Another staff member said the HOPE system "empowers, educates, encourages, and edifies youth and their lives via school, church, and education programs." Other staff see HOPE as a mediator for dysfunctional families and as a model for the community of how parents can get involved in their children's lives.

When asked to describe their involvement with HOPE, several staff members mentioned that it was a great opportunity to work with the youth in the community. Staff reported feeling encouraged by the changes they witness in the youth and their families and that they are making a difference in the lives of the youth and are energized and motivated to continue the work. One staff member noted that some changes take time but others are instant, such as providing jobs and food to needy families. Staff described HOPE as trying to build relationships with people so they have an ally in their corner. Staff members have been involved with HOPE for various lengths of time, from less than two years to as long as five years. One staff member began as a volunteer and is now employed by HOPE.

Staff members were asked to identify the main strengths of the HOPE program. The importance of dedicated and committed staff was a recurring theme. Staff reported coming together in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation for the kids. Staff members see youth as resources with untapped potential. To them, the belief that youth can develop in school and come to be seen as contributing members of society is a key concept. Other staff members reported feeling compelled to work with youth because of a dedication and love for kids and feel their work is not a job but an outgrowth of serving the Lord.

Staff members were then asked to identify the main weaknesses of the HOPE program. Overall, staff reported feeling overwhelmed by the volume of work due to trying to help as many families as possible. Limited finances, a shortage of staff, youth transportation, and internal and external communication issues also were identified as weaknesses.

When asked how the HOPE program differed from other types of tutoring/mentoring programs, staff members' responses varied. Differences cited were the fact that HOPE is faith-based, HOPE serves the whole family and not just the child, and HOPE looks at each youth as an individual. One staff member didn't see it as being different but added, "HOPE is more involved as far as trying to meet the needs of youth."

HOPE staff were asked to describe the involvement of family members of youth participating in HOPE activities. Staff members indicated that involvement from siblings is present but parent involvement is lacking. Activities are open to all family members and parents are strongly encouraged to attend. HOPE is currently working on setting up a parent advisory council that will meet bimonthly. Staff members reported that most families do not fully understand the program and that many families contacted HOPE only when a crisis arose.

When asked for suggestions for improving the HOPE program, increased funding was suggested most often. Staff reported that increased funding would allow additional staff to be hired, provide for additional resources such as Hi-Y and cultural events, and increase fringe benefits for staff. Other suggestions included more parent and youth involvement in non-mandated activities, continued assessment of the effectiveness of the program, cell phones for staff, more staff meetings to stay focused, and getting outside involvement with the program.

Staff members were asked what value they place on HOPE's involvement with AEL in impacting at-risk youth. They cited technical assistance with survey development and data collection, and an understanding of the importance of measurable goals and objectives, as great assets of the involvement with AEL. One staff member said that AEL offers "elevated organizational intelligence to understand the importance of research-based curriculum and activity."

When asked what AEL could do to improve its services in working with HOPE, staff suggested that AEL should continue to learn about grassroot community-level issues and how community organizations operate. Another suggestion was that AEL should work with HOPE staff on a regular basis in participating schools. Staff also were interested in learning more about AEL services in order to know how those services could be applied to the HOPE program.

Finally, HOPE staff were asked what type of technical assistance is needed for other faith-based organizations to design and implement programs that support the educational attainment of at-risk youth. Staff members reported that first you must have a clear vision of how the program will help youth and an understanding that it may not be automatically effective. Organizations must be in it for the duration because there are no quick returns for seeing measurable improvement. Other comments included database management assistance for record keeping, understanding legal issues and paperwork, knowledge of funding opportunities, and committed staff.

Student Interviews

AEL conducted two group interviews with a convenience sample of high school students participating in the HOPE Youth Development Movement. HOPE staff identified these students and secured their willingness to participate. The first group interview was held on Tuesday, June 25, 2002, with three students. The second was held on Friday, July 19, 2002, with five students. Both group interviews took place at Grace Bible Church, where the HOPE program was located at that time.

The students participating in the group interviews had been involved with the HOPE program for various lengths of time. One student had been involved for only four weeks, 1 for four months, 2 for approximately a year, 2 for two years, and another student had participated for four years. One student did not comment.

The first question asked students to describe the types of HOPE activities in which they had participated. Summer jobs were mentioned by several of the students. The students mentioned that they were paid $5.15 per hour for their work. Students also reported participating in community service projects such as painting houses and general duties. These community service projects were not mandatory activities and were usually scheduled about once a month. Tutoring sessions were also available for students once or twice a week in all subject areas. Students noted that tutoring was a requirement if they received below a 2.0 grade point average [*Note*: Tutoring is a requirement by HOPE if grade point average is below a *3.0*]. Students also participated in other activities such as basketball games and reward trips.

Students were asked how they got involved with HOPE; again, responses varied. Two students got involved because their friends were involved. One student said, "My school pretty much mandated that I attend." One student was encouraged to join by his mother. Other students reported learning of the program from the school counselor, the employment office, and advertisements at their school.

When asked to describe how the HOPE program operates, students indicated that all participants must first take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE®), which measures basic reading, mathematics, and language skills. Students noted they then must complete required paperwork before participating in program activities and that they can earn up to $120 each quarter by regularly attending school, staying out of trouble, attending mandatory activities, and keeping their grades up. Deductions may result due to lack of participation, failing grades, and behavioral problems. Students also noted that there were rewards for doing their work, such as a trip to Six Flags amusement park.

Several students also described the HOPE program as a place to find help. Students reported that HOPE staff are always available to talk, to help them find a job after graduation, and to help with school.

Academics and self-esteem seem to be the main strengths of the HOPE program. Several students said the program helps with school and their grades. One student said, "It helps you

carry yourself better." Other reported strengths included the HOPE staff and the money (a reference to the stipend).

Students were then asked about the benefits they had gained from participating in the HOPE program. Students again reported that HOPE is a place to find help. One student added, "[HOPE] helps you get your life straight if you have problems." Other benefits mentioned were it gives students something to do, helps students set future goals, and the activities available.

The main weaknesses of the HOPE program cited by students were more diverse than the strengths. Students replied that tutoring should occur more often and during the school day because not all students can stay after school. Other noted weaknesses were scheduled times of meetings, not enough advance notice of scheduled activities, and not enough field trips.

When asked how the HOPE program differed from other types of tutoring/mentoring programs, only two of the students had participated in other programs. One student responded, "HOPE is better because there are more people and they try to help you better yourself for life not just with school." This student had participated in activities at local community centers. Another student had been involved with Girl Scouts and said there were more group activities with HOPE.

Students were asked to describe the involvement of their family members in HOPE activities. Four students said their mothers had participated in program activities, encouraged them to be involved, or were interested in working with the HOPE program. One student said her cousins were also involved in the HOPE program and another student reported no family involvement.

Students were asked for suggestions that would improve the HOPE program. All of the responses were related to scheduling. Comments included activities and meetings should be scheduled for later in the morning and that students need more advance notification of activities. Overall, students suggested there should be better coordination and scheduling of HOPE activities.

Finally, students were given the opportunity to make any other comments regarding their participation in the HOPE program. While most of the students said they had nothing further to add, three students made additional comments. One student again referred to the money that could be earned by participating in the program. One student said, "You are here because you want to be here" and another added, "It is not just a place to hang out with friends."

Parent Interviews

While it was not possible to bring together a group of parents at one time and central location, an AEL evaluator spent a Saturday in November at the HOPE office as parents brought their children in to pick up their HOPE stipend checks. As parents entered the office, they were asked if they would be willing to participate in a short interview about their perceptions of the HOPE program. A total of seven parents agreed to be interviewed.

Parents were first asked how their children got involved with HOPE. Several parents said their children got involved through school, one indicated the job placement office, and one parent didn't know. When asked how the HOPE program operated, parents most frequently mentioned their children receive a check for regularly attending school. Other comments included HOPE provides summer jobs, opportunities for trips, and is very good for kids. One parent was not familiar with how the program operated.

Parents were asked to describe the HOPE activities in which they or their children participated. Parents noted that several of the children were currently participating in the job referral program and also were receiving tutoring. Three parents indicated they had attended an informational meeting at the Marriott Hotel the day before being interviewed. Two parents said they had not attended any HOPE activities.

The main strengths of the HOPE program that parents mentioned were that it helped their children to stay involved in school, provided job opportunities, and offered money for attending school. One parent was unclear about the strengths of the program but indicated a desire to become more involved with HOPE.

Parents were then asked what benefits their children or families had gained from participating in the HOPE program. Parents seem most willing to talk about the benefits their children had received. Parents mentioned tutoring, increased self-esteem, a sense of belonging, and recreational activities as the greatest benefits for their children. One parent said, "[HOPE] is for all kids." It provides music, food, and a time for sharing ideas and philosophies. Two parents also indicated that their children benefited from the summer jobs and the money (referring to the stipend).

Parents also were given the opportunity to identify any weaknesses of the HOPE program. However, none of the parents who were interviewed could identify any weaknesses.

Parents were asked how the HOPE program differed from other types of youth development programs. The parents interviewed had no prior experience with other programs. Finally, parents were asked what suggestions they would make for improving the HOPE program. One parent noted that advance notification for activities or phone calls would be good; the remaining parents had no suggestions for improvement.

Staff Reflections on Lessons Learned

The three involved AEL project staff provided reflective comments related to their involvement with the HOPE Youth Development Movement and the lessons they have learned to date. These comments reflect on perceived successes and failures, lessons learned, and issues for future consideration. These may be helpful in identifying effective strategies for fostering development of youth, which is the goal of documenting what works in effective school-community partnerships under AEL's School/Community Connections thrust. A summary of these narratives is provided below.

One crucial element of HOPE's success is the zeal and will the staff of HOPE bring to their work. They are genuinely caring people who see their work as part of a mission from God, and this is one of the strengths of their work. The rapport that they have with youth, many of whom would be considered throwaways by society, is great. The staff never give up and continue to press for the best for the youth they serve.

The informal knowledge that HOPE staff have about their program participants is key to helping them serve their community. They know things about the youths' backgrounds, home lives, community, social interactions, and so on, that would be impossible for someone who had a more distant relationship to know.

One downside of working at HOPE is the modest compensation for the long hours program staff work. Because staff do so much for so little, the tendency is actually a de-motivator to write grants that realistically cover the costs of programs. In the long run, this may work against the quality of services the program can provide, because when better opportunities present themselves staff may be enticed to take better-paying jobs with benefits. Too, program staff may work more than one job to make ends meet, increasing fatigue and draining talent and energy away from HOPE work.

There also is a tendency to try and provide services to anyone that wants to participate rather than limiting program size to the number of people the program is designed to accommodate. A related problem is trying to be all things to all people. With limited staff and budget it is almost impossible to offer high-quality services in all areas, e.g., tutoring, mentoring, sex education, and so on, to all age groups. It may be more effective for HOPE to narrow its focus to middle and high school students only, already the majority of their participants.

Two major needs of HOPE are funding and technical assistance with building their capacity for grant writing. If AEL could help HOPE staff develop programs that would generate income to sustain their programs, that would be the way to go. It is difficult for organizations such as HOPE to plan to implement long-term initiatives because their sources of funding vary so much from year to year.

Although these programs have begun to recognize how important evaluation of their work is, they do not allocate funding for this item. We are moving into a time when potential funders will require evidence and AEL has not made an effort to develop their expertise, even at a modest level, in this area.

Through the original work with the Partnership of African American Churches, and in the current work with the HOPE Youth Development Movement, it has been evident that time for building commitment and trust is essential.

One factor needed for successful interaction with a faith-based organization is a "cultural bridge"—someone who understands both AEL's work and the faith community environment. The person serving as this bridge needs to be viewed credibly by the faith community. AEL's involvement with faith-based organizations relies heavily on personal commitment to initiate and sustain ongoing relationships.

In initiating work with a faith-based organization, AEL needs to clearly articulate the mission and goals of the partnership, and focus on areas of commonality first in order to establish a level of trust between the two agencies.

Trust is an issue for building connections between low-income African American communities and schools. Working through African American faith-based organizations mitigates the trust issue, since such organizations traditionally represent the interests of African American people unmodified by "establishment" constraints. Once a partnership between school or district personnel and a faith-based organization includes true dialogue (both groups are heard, not just a one-way communication), the trust built can spread to others.

A caution in looking to faith-based organizations to help educators reach parents lies in the fact that such agencies also struggle to reach parents. While such organizations are generally trusted, many parents look to them to help their children without assuming their need to be involved. A second danger may arise if faith-based staff see themselves as "rescuing" the youth from the bad influences of their families and/or communities.

A key piece of work for AEL is leadership development among church and community volunteer workers. Many are comfortable working as individuals with children, but are unaccustomed to taking leadership roles among their peers. As long as leadership remains with those accustomed to leading, programs may improve in reach and effectiveness yet nothing essential will change in the communities themselves.

Given the limited amount of AEL staff time and resources allocated to this project, care must be given to try to stay within the general framework currently established in the AEL REL Updated Annual Plan in terms of technical assistance services and number of faith-based sites.

Another concern for working with faith-based organizations is the language that AEL staff use to communicate. Often we speak an educational lingo that others are not privy to, and this may unintentionally inhibit clear, complete communication/collaboration. And, for a program to be successful, it is important for stakeholders to take ownership from the beginning.

Student Records

HOPE staff provided AEL evaluators with a copy of their students' records via an Access database and a paper file. These data included student gender, race, and nine-week course grades for the 2001-2002 school year. For comparison purposes, data pertaining to the first and second nine-week grades for four core subjects (English, math, science, and history) were utilized in AEL's baseline data analyses. A total of 145 of the 174 students had first and second nine-week grades for at least one of the above subjects and thus comprised the sample for this analysis. The students were fairly even by gender, with 55% males. More than half were African American (66%), with 34% White. Student ages ranged from 14 to 19 years (14 = 31%, 15 = 25%, 16 = 20%, 17 = 12%, 18 = 9%, and 19 = 2%); the average age was 15.5 years (standard deviation of 1.4). Data on enrollment dates were not available, but a HOPE staff member did verbally confirm by phone that these students were enrolled during the first nine-week period.

The repeated measures ANOVAs for English and history found no statistically significant differences (main effects or interactions) in students' grades from the first to second nine-week grading period. Further, there were no significant differences by gender/race groupings. However, for three of the four groups of students (Black males, White males, and Black females) both history and English grades declined slightly from the first to second nine-week period (history grades were unchanged for White females).

The repeated measures ANOVA for math found a statistically significant difference (main effect) in students' grades from the first to second nine-week grading period ($F(1,87) = 13.52$, $p < .05$), but no significant interaction between math and gender/race groupings. As well, significant differences were found by race and gender groupings ($F(3,87) = 5.22$, $p < .05$). White females scored significantly higher than all three of their counterpart groups. Overall, math grades declined from the first to second nine-week period for each group of students. As a measure of practical effectiveness, the effect sizes for these statistically significant differences were minimal at .13 for the difference from the first to second nine-week period and .15 for the race/gender grouping. In other words, the significance may be due more to statistical power (sample size) than actual practical meaningfulness.

The repeated measures ANOVA for science found a statistically significant difference (main effect) in students' grades from the first to second nine-week grading period ($F(1,84) = 6.50$, $p < .05$) but no significant interaction between science and gender/race groupings. As well, significant differences were found by race/gender groupings ($F(3,84) = 4.16$, $p < .05$). White males and White females scored significantly higher than Black males. Overall, science grades declined from the first to second nine-week period for each group of students. As a measure of practical effectiveness, the effect sizes for these statistically significant differences were minimal at .07 for the difference from the first to second nine-week period and .13 for the race/gender grouping. Again, the significance may be due more to statistical power (sample size) than actual practical meaningfulness.

To show the differences in subject grades, Table 3 provides descriptive information for the first and second nine-week grades for all students and by a breakdown of gender and race. Figure 1 then presents four subject-specific line graphs depicting mean scores by nine-week period by gender and race groupings.

In sum, students showed the greatest variance in grades in math and science and generally received better grades in these two subjects than in English and history. Further, except for English and history for white females, students' grades declined from the first to second nine-week grading period.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for HOPE Students
Fall 2001 Subject Grades by Gender and Race

Subjects	All Students			Black Males			White Males			Black Females			White Females		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
1st 9 weeks															
English	114	2.1	1.1	37	2.1	1.1	17	2.1	1.3	30	2.3	0.9	15	2.1	1.4
Math	110	2.5	1.1	35	2.4	1.1	15	2.3	0.7	28	2.4	1.0	16	3.2	0.8
Science	102	2.5	1.1	34	2.2	1.2	15	3.0	0.8	24	2.4	0.9	15	2.9	1.1
History	107	2.0	1.1	33	2.0	1.0	17	2.4	1.3	26	2.0	1.1	14	2.4	0.9
2nd 9 weeks															
English	119	2.0	1.1	38	2.0	1.0	17	2.0	1.1	34	2.2	1.1	14	2.1	1.2
Math	110	2.1	1.2	37	1.6	1.0	17	2.1	0.9	26	2.2	1.2	16	2.9	0.9
Science	110	2.1	1.1	35	1.8	1.0	16	2.7	1.1	26	2.0	1.0	17	2.6	1.1
History	104	1.9	1.1	36	1.8	1.1	15	2.3	1.1	24	1.8	1.0	13	2.5	1.1

Scale: 0 = F; 4 = A.

Note: These mean scores may differ slightly from those depicted in Figure 1, since data in this table are based on all respondents in each group, regardless of whether or not a student had scores for both the first and second nine-week period for a particular subject.

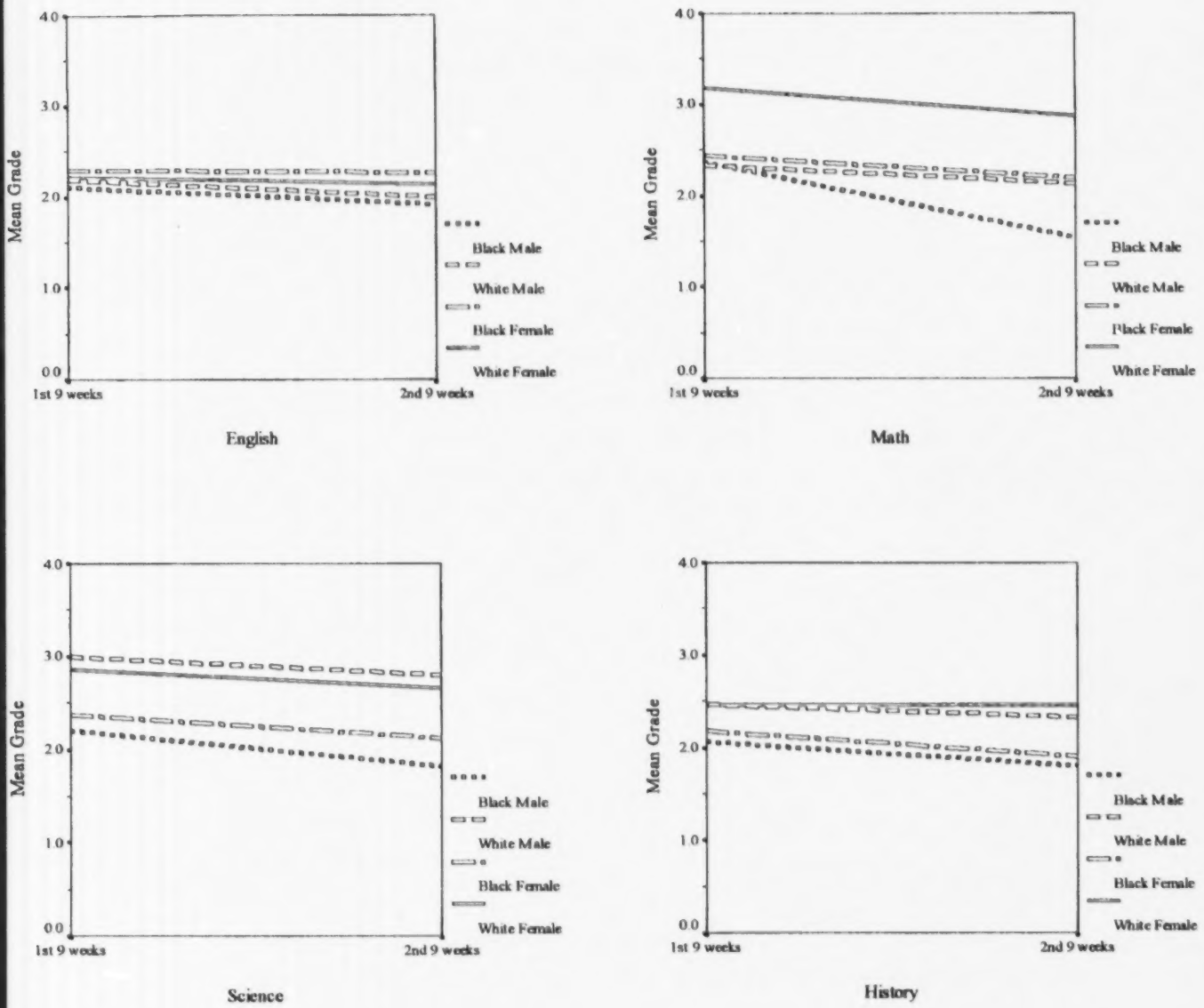


Figure 1: Fall 2001 Subject Grades for HOPE Students by Gender and Race

AEL Skills Inventory

Out of approximately 300, a total of 174 HOPE Youth Development Movement participants responded to this survey (about 58% response rate). The instrument was distributed in the summer of 2002 and results serve as the baseline data for this measure.

The first two items of the AEL Skills Inventory were demographic items—gender and grade level. Fifty percent responded that they were female. Participants ranged from sixth grade to twelfth grade (4% selected postsecondary) with students most often selecting the eleventh grade (24%), followed by ninth grade (23%), and tenth grade (22%).

Next, students were given a series of selected-response items that were listed under seven subscale headings. The subscales of the AEL Skills Inventory include Confidence, Written Communications, Oral Communications, Values, Decision Making, Problem Solving, and Planning. Students were asked to rate their feelings from 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Almost Always).

For analysis purposes, each set of items within a subscale was added together and divided by the total number of items to create subscale mean scores. All seven subscales had means ranging within a 1-point spread of 3.62 for the Written Communications subscale to 3.99 for the Values subscale on the 5-point scale. Standard deviations for the seven subscales were very similar, ranging from .75 to .81. See Table 4 for subscale descriptive statistics.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for AEL Skills Inventory Subscales

Subscale	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Confidence	174	3.70	.75
Written Communications	174	3.62	.79
Oral Communications	174	3.63	.81
Values	174	3.99	.79
Decision Making	173	3.80	.75
Problem Solving	173	3.70	.81
Planning	172	3.84	.77

Scale:
1 = Almost Never;
5 = Almost Always

One-way ANOVAs were computed comparing grade-level responses and gender responses on the subscale items. No statistically significant differences existed among grade levels, but statistically significant differences were found between male and female students in Written Communications ($F(1,169) = 7.76, p < .05$), Values ($F(1,169) = 10.69, p < .05$), and Planning ($F(1,167) = 4.16, p < .05$). For each subscale, females had significantly higher mean scores than their male counterparts. However, given the relatively small to moderate effect sizes generated (.42, .52, and .31, respectively), the magnitude of the gender differences for these three subscales may not be large enough to be practically significant, i.e., due more to statistical power (sample size). See Table 5 for more statistical details and Figure 2 for a visual depiction of the mean subscale scores by gender.

Table 5: Results of One-Way ANOVAs
by Gender for AEL Skills Inventory Subscales

Subscale	Male		Female		df	*F*	*p*	Mean Diff.	*d*
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD					
Confidence	3.69	.85	3.71	.64	1, 169	0.02	ns	.02	na
Written Com.	3.46	.75	3.78	.79	1, 169	7.76	.006	.32	.42
Oral Com.	3.54	.85	3.71	.78	1, 169	1.96	ns	.17	na
Values	3.81	.91	4.19	.56	1, 169	10.69	.001	.38	.52
Decision Making	3.71	.81	3.93	.64	1, 168	3.88	ns	.22	na
Problem Solving	3.62	.88	3.79	.74	1, 168	1.78	ns	.17	na
Planning	3.74	.85	3.97	.62	1, 167	4.16	.043	.23	.31

Scale: 1 = Almost Never; 5 = Almost Always

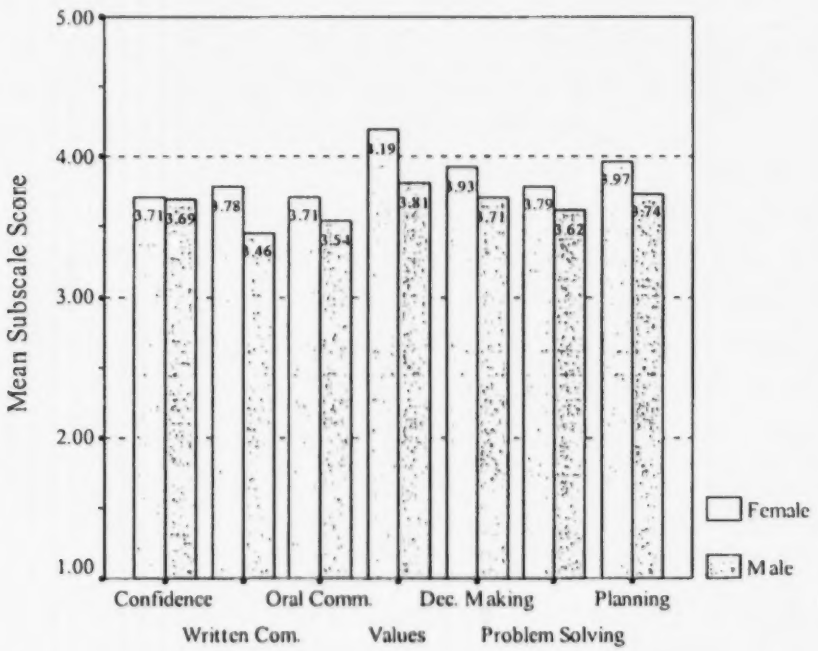


Figure 2: Mean Scores for AEL Skills Inventory Subscales by Gender

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Satisfaction Survey

This survey was administered along with the AEL Skills Inventory in the summer of 2002 to the approximately 300 high school students participating in the HOPE program and again in November 2002 to students as they arrived at the HOPE office to pick up their stipend checks. A total of 174 completed surveys were received from the first administration and 119 from the second administration. Results are provided below comparing the two independent administrations.

Students were asked what school they attended. Nearly half of the students were from Capital High School in the first administration (58%); Capital still had the most students in the second administration (36%). South Charleston High School was the next most frequently mentioned school, at 14% in the first administration and 21% in the second administration. See Table 6 for a summary of responses by administration.

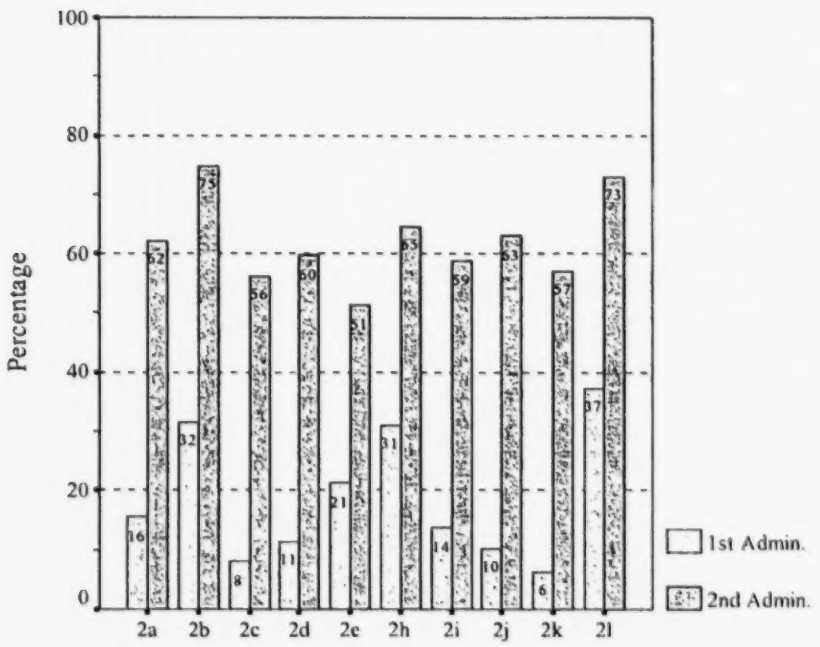
Table 6: Number and Percent of Students by Administration for Satisfaction Survey

High School	Administration #1: Summer 2002		Administration #2: Fall 2002	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Capital	81	47%	42	35%
Washington	6	3%	4	3%
Hoover	2	1%	1	1%
Nitro	2	1%	1	1%
Riverside	17	10%	17	14%
Sissonville	6	3%	8	7%
South Charleston	19	11%	24	20%
St. Albans	7	4%	7	6%
Other/Unidentified	34	20%	15	13%

Students were then given a list of HOPE services and asked to select the services they had received during this year. Students could select any or all of a number of services, which included (a) character education, (b) field trips, (c) postsecondary education awareness, (d) youth entrepreneurship training, (e) WIA initiative, (f) alternative sentencing, (g) transition/re-entry, (h) tutoring/mentoring, (i) career awareness, (j) college preparation, (k) abstinence education, (l) job referral, (m) intervention for juvenile offenders, and (n) truancy diversion.* The services most often selected by students at both administrations were job referral (37% and 73% for the first and second administrations), field trips/enrichment opportunities (32% and 75% respectively), and tutoring/mentoring (31% and 65%, respectively). See Figure 3 for more information regarding HOPE services.

---

*Four activities were added after the first administration: (f) alternative sentencing, (g) transition/re-entry, (m) intervention for juvenile offenders, and (n) truancy diversion.



Note: 2a = character education, 2b = field trips, 2c = postsecondary education awareness, 2d = youth entrepreneurship training, 2e = WIA initiative, 2h = tutoring/mentoring, 2i = career awareness, 2j = college preparation, 2k = abstinence education, 2l = job referral

Figure 3: Percentage of HOPE Services Received by Students

Students were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied) for a series of items pertaining to the HOPE services they had received. For the first administration, means ranged from 3.84 for the extent to which students improved academically to 4.11 for the extent to which the HOPE program positively impacted students' lives; standard deviations ranged from 0.92 to 1.08. For the second administration, means were higher for seven of the eight items and ranged from 3.81, again for the extent to which students improved academically, to 4.25 for the quality of services received; standard deviations ranged from 0.95 to 1.21. See Table 7 for a summary of descriptive statistics by administration and Figure 4 for a visual depiction of mean item scores by administration. In general, students indicated greater satisfaction during the second administration (except about the extent to which they grew spiritually).

One-way ANOVAs were computed comparing item responses by administration. Only one statistically significant difference was found between the two administrations. Students in the second administration rated quality of services received higher (mean 4.25, standard deviation 1.06) than did students in the first administration (mean 3.98, standard deviation 1.08) ($F(1,279) = 4.34$, $p < 05$). As a measure of practical effectiveness, the effect size for this statistically significant difference was small at .25. In other words, the significance may be due more to statistical power (sample size) than practical meaningfulness.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics by Administration for Satisfaction Survey

Items	Administration #1: Summer 2002			Administration #2: Fall 2002		
	Number	Mean	Std. Dev.	Number	Mean	Std. Dev
3. Quality of services received	163	3.98	1.08	118	4.25	1.06
4. Appropriateness for my situation	156	3.85	1.02	115	4.05	0.97
5. Extent services met my needs	158	3.97	0.92	116	4.19	0.95
6. Efficiency of delivered services	158	3.85	1.01	117	4.02	1.06
7. Extent I acquired new skills	155	3.92	0.94	116	4.03	1.08
8. Extent I improved academically	150	3.84	1.02	116	3.88	1.21
9. Extent I grew spiritually	150	3.88	1.00	117	3.81	1.08
10. Extent positively impacted my life	152	4.11	0.97	117	4.14	1.05

Scale: 1 = Very Dissatisfied; 5 = Very Satisfied

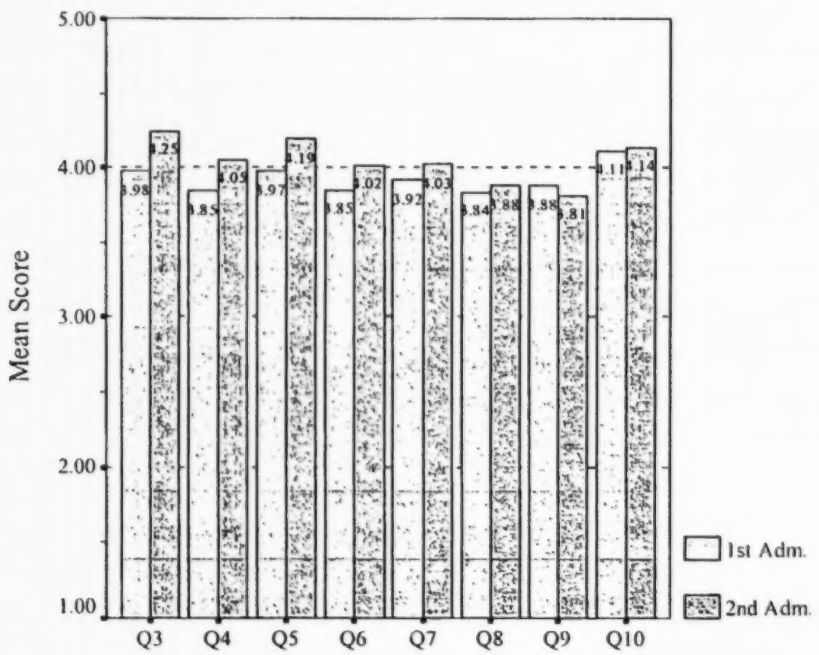


Figure 4: Mean Scores for Satisfaction Survey Items by Administration

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For the following analysis, responses of satisfied or very satisfied were combined to indicate satisfaction; see Figure 5 for a visual depiction of item satisfaction by administration. For each item except the extent to which students had grown spiritually, a higher percentage of second-administration respondents indicated satisfaction.

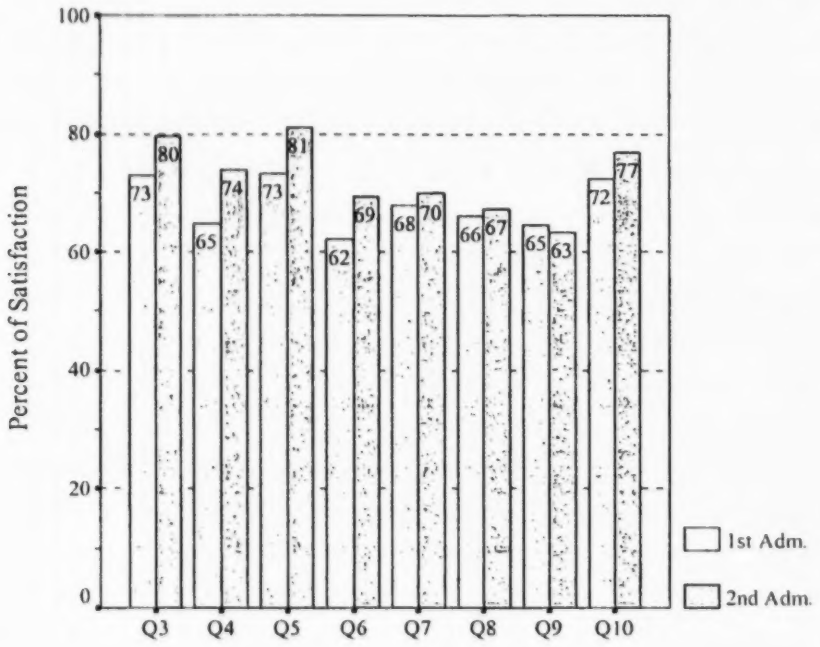


Figure 5: Percent of Agreement for Satisfaction Survey Items by Administration

Students were then asked two open-ended questions. When asked what they liked most about HOPE, 134 students in the first administration responded with 166 discrete comments; 113 students in the second administration responded with 140 discrete comments. Overall, students' most-liked feature of HOPE was the caring staff (22% and 21% respectively for the first and second administrations). See Table 8 for a summary of the most frequent themes emerging from both administrations.

When asked what they liked least about HOPE, 116 students in the first administration replied with 118 discrete comments; 102 students in the second administration provided a comment. More than half of the students in each group (53% and 59%, respectively) indicated there was nothing they disliked about HOPE. See Table 9 for a summary of the most frequent themes emerging from both administrations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 8: Summary of What Students Liked Most About HOPE by Administration

First Administration: Summer 2002		Second Administration: Fall 2002	
Percent	Topic	Percent	Topic
22%	Caring staff	21%	Caring staff
19%	Job experience	20%	Field trips/activities
13%	Money	15%	Assistance offered
11%	Miscellaneous	13%	Job experience
9%	Assistance offered	13%	Miscellaneous
7%	Field trips/activities	11%	Money
5%	Tutoring	7%	Tutoring
4%	Fun/interesting	3%	Everything
4%	Something to do		
3%	Everything		
2%	Don't know		

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 9: Summary of What Students Liked Least About HOPE by Administration

First Administration: Summer 2002		Second Administration: Fall 2002	
Percent	Topic	Percent	Topic
53%	Nothing disliked	59%	Nothing disliked
14%	Miscellaneous	13%	Meetings/activities
11%	Meetings/activities	12%	Miscellaneous
7%	Scheduling	6%	Scheduling
6%	Paperwork	4%	Money (amount or frequency)
5%	Jobs	4%	Jobs
3%	Money (amount or frequency)	3%	Transportation
2%	Tutoring		

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Summaries by Evaluation Question

Question One

What types of technical assistance are needed to help build the capacity of faith-based organizations to design and implement programs that support and nurture the educational attainment of youth, especially high-risk and at-risk youth?

Through AEL staff reflections, a variety of technical assistance strategies to help build the capacity of faith-based organizations were noted. Staff also noted that training in grant writing helps such organizations develop programs to generate income to sustain their services. Similarly, sound evaluation practices are a key part of any successful grant, and AEL can provide expertise in this area. A third area of technical assistance is leadership development. According to staff reflections, many faith-based staff and/or volunteers are unaccustomed to serving in leadership roles; such assistance could help these workers become more comfortable in this capacity.

Interviews with HOPE staff by AEL evaluators revealed perceptions of AEL's technical assistance as high quality with "organizational intelligence" to understand the importance of research-based curriculum and activity, measurable goals and objectives, and accurate data collection. HOPE staff viewed AEL's assistance as helpful and valuable, and deemed it to be a great asset.

To helping other faith-based organizations design and implement programs, HOPE staff suggested that such organizations must first have a clear vision of what they desire to accomplish in terms of helping youth. They also noted that patience was critical, i.e., a focus on the long term because measurable improvements take time. Further, HOPE staff noted that AEL could provide assistance with record keeping, legal issues and/or paperwork, and identification of funding opportunities.

Several suggestions from HOPE staff for improving AEL's technical assistance services included continued learning about and understanding of grassroots community-level issues and how community organizations operate, and more involvement of AEL staff in school-site activities.

Question Two

What impact does participation in an educational or social program run by a faith-based organization have on high-risk or at-risk youths' overall educational experience (i.e., academic achievement, attendance, attitude toward learning, behavior)?

Student interviewees told AEL evaluators of HOPE's positive impact on their academic progress and their self-esteem, but inspection of academic records did not support these perceptions. Students noted the individualized emphasis they received, and their perceptions that

HOPE staff were truly interested in helping each child. In fact, the one topic most frequently mentioned as most liked about HOPE was the caring, committed staff.

On average, HOPE students had grades of B or C in each of the four subjects studied, with higher grades in math than in English, history, or science. Students' math and science grades dropped significantly from the first to second nine-week period, yet effect sizes were minimal. And, while grades did drop from the first to second nine weeks, they were still well within the passing range. However, Black males consistently fared worse grade-wise for all four subjects for both grading periods.

Students' scores on the self-report AEL Skills Inventory ranged for the most part from 3.5 to 4.0 (maximum score = 5) for each of seven behavioral areas (confidence, written communications, oral communications, values, decision making, problem solving, and planning), indicating that they felt mostly positive about actions pertaining to each area.

In terms of satisfaction with HOPE services and the impact the program had on their lives, about three fourths of the students completing the Satisfaction survey indicated they were satisfied with the extent to which the HOPE services met their needs and positively impacted their lives. About two thirds indicated they were satisfied with new skills or knowledge they had gained and their spiritual growth.

Question Three

To what degree and in what ways are faith-based organizations able to engage family members of youth involved in their programs in activities that support the academic achievement of youth?

At this point in time, HOPE staff believed that family involvement in their program was less than satisfactory, based on interviews conducted by AEL evaluators. HOPE staff interviewees mentioned that multiple siblings often participated in the program, but that parent involvement was lacking. They noted that activities were open to all family members, yet felt that most parents turned to HOPE only in a crisis situation. Further, HOPE staff also reported that even though parents seemed to support the program, they didn't seem to fully understand the comprehensive array of services.

Student data corroborated staff's perceptions, with few students noting active parent participation, according to student interviews conducted by AEL evaluators. Students thought parents supported their participation passively (i.e., through encouragement for attending) rather than actively (i.e., by becoming involved and attending activities). Finally, in interviews conducted by AEL evaluators, parents themselves indicated almost no active involvement in HOPE activities and few indicated that they actually understood the program fully.

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this evaluation.

- The data collection instruments seem to provide a comprehensive picture of a faith-based organization's youth program. The mixed-method approach of surveys, interviews, reflections, and academic records provides a triangulation of data that compensates for any inherent weaknesses in a particular collection strategy.

- The various collection methods do not seem overly burdensome to faith-based staff or overly intrusive to participants. Data were collected in a timely manner, once AEL and HOPE staff were able to coordinate their schedules. However, there were difficulties encountered in identifying sufficient numbers of students and parents willing to be interviewed.

- One area that seems to have been left untapped is the perceptions of faith-based staff in terms of their communication and collaboration with their community schools. The interview protocols did not include any mention of this aspect.

- It seems that the time is ripe, with the conclusion of this report, to work closely with HOPE staff in building their capacity for evaluative activities, interpretations, and utilization. HOPE staff willingly shared all requested data and have seemed most appreciative of the evaluation assistance received to date.

- It also seems apparent, given AEL staff and HOPE staff input, that AEL's future work with HOPE staff could focus on capacity building in the areas of leadership development and training in grant writing so that HOPE staff can sustain current services.

- On average, HOPE students earned Cs in English, history, and science, and Bs in math. However, students' math and science grades dropped significantly from the first to second nine-week period. Further, Black males consistently fared worse grade-wise for all four subjects for both grading periods.

- HOPE students report feeling positive about their actions and attitudes related to confidence, written communications, oral communications, values, decision making, problem solving, and planning.

- HOPE students report that the HOPE services are adequately meeting their needs and positively impacting their lives. They show less satisfaction with knowledge or skills gained from their participation in the HOPE program or spiritual growth.

- There seems to be a discrepancy regarding academic improvement as a result of HOPE participation. Two thirds of the students indicated they were satisfied with their academic improvements and interviewees noted the academic benefits of such participation, yet students' grades did decline in four subject areas across grading periods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the conclusions noted previously, several recommendations are suggested for improving any future data collection efforts.

- AEL project and evaluation staff need to work closely with faith-based staff to strategize ways to promote more participation (number and depth) of both students and parents in future group interviews. Perhaps one such strategy might be to schedule an evening interview, with dinner provided, so that parents and students could attend and participate without feeling pressured to skip or rush through the interview.

- AEL could consider tailoring future technical assistance to HOPE staff toward training in grant writing and leadership, if HOPE staff are receptive to this suggestion and willing to work on these endeavors.

- The interview protocol for faith-based staff should be modified to include questions pertaining to their perceptions of school communication/collaboration.

- HOPE staff may want to investigate possible causes for students' grade declines across grading periods. And, they may consider monitoring students' grades more closely by grading periods, to try to intervene as necessary to avoid such declines. Further, they may want to intensify their tutoring activities with Black males, given their consistently lower grades. However, as Linn and Haug (2002) note, "changes in scores for . . . groups of students have a great deal of volatility" (p. 1). While their research pertained specifically to year-to-year score changes, it may be that the same principle applies to within-year changes, i.e., that student grades are not always a reliable measure. Linn and Haug offer a number of ways to improve the accuracy of results: combining data across multiple grades, multiple subject areas, and multiple years. While multiple grades and multiple subject areas are already included in the present study, the inclusion next year of multiple years would provide a longitudinal look at students' scores.

REFERENCES

AEL. (2000). *AEL technical proposal for operation of the regional educational laboratory in the Appalachian Region for 2001-2005.* Charleston, WV: Author.

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. (1994). *The program evaluation standards: How to assess evaluations of educational programs*, (second edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Karnes, F. A., & Chauvin, J. C. (1985). *Leadership Skills Inventory.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Kusimo, P. (1999). *Rural African Americans and education: The legacy of the Brown decision.* ERIC Digest. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Linn, R. L., & Haug, C. (2002). *Stability of school building accountability scores and gains.* CSE Technical Report 561. Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Evaluation, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California.

Schorr, L. B. (1998). *Common purpose: Strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America.* New York: Anchor Books.

Workforce Investment Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794d (1998).

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Description of HOPE Programs

HOPE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT

	PROGRAM	PROGRAM SYNOPSIS
1.	**Tutoring**	Instruction in basic skills, study skills, job preparation and job readiness skills, college application process, dropout prevention strategies, and workshops on postsecondary education opportunities. Program includes individual as well as group tutoring and is in place in 18 Kanawha County schools.
2.	**Alternative Secondary School Services**	Services are provided based on individual needs within the traditional school setting. There are nonacademic programs that address the socioeconomic challenges youth face. These services provide alternatives to youth not currently enrolled in school by giving them a pathway back into the educational/career mainstream.
3.	**Job Referral Program**	Highlighted as a model program at the *2000 Emerging Workforce Summit*, this program works closely with local businesses to hire employees and with local residents seeking employment. This model is directly linked to academic and occupational training. Because of HOPE's partnership with One Valley Bank between 1996 and 2000, One Valley (now BB&T) was recognized by the Office of Federal Contractor Compliance as a company with Best Practices.
4.	**Internships/Job Shadowing**	Youth participate in field trips to local businesses as well as to educational facilities. Youth have the opportunity to earn a monthly stipend. These stipends are based on participation in designated activities.
5.	**Occupational Skills Training**	Training is provided on the job by employers partnering with us in this program. For older youth who are prepared, the community college partners provide specific occupational training as determined by skill and interest assessments.
6.	**Leadership Development**	The development of indigenous leadership is essential to the empowerment of poor communities. The HOPE Leadership Challenge Program teaches youth principles of leadership and provides them with leadership opportunities. This program seeks to impact individual behavior that will increase the likelihood that permanent change in attitude and behavior will occur. Opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities, encourage responsibility and positive social behaviors. This program also utilizes curricula development by Rev. Matthew Watts and the Education Development Center.
7.	**Youth Entrepreneurship Training**	This program exposes youth to the concepts of entrepreneurship. Young people are taught how to create jobs for themselves as well as others in the community. For the past two years, HOPE has sent a delegation of youth to the National Youth Entrepreneurs Symposium. Youth also participate in programs such as the Light Stone Community Development Corporation.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

8.	**Mentoring**	This effective program uses individual as well as group mentoring and is being offered in 15 Kanawha County schools. It uses a national curriculum developed by West Virginia natives, Drs. Harold and Ollie Davis. This successful program is currently serving over 200 youth and provides mentors for all youth from 14 - 23. We provide mentors for in-school and out-of-school youth, adjudicated youth, and those youth on probation and parole.
9.	**Substance Abuse Counseling**	This program utilizes multiple strategies to aid youth with substance abuse problems. HOPE has recently formed an alliance with Process Strategies and Prestera to refer youth for evaluation and treatment.
10.	**Community Service**	This program gives youth the opportunity to "give back." Youth are given the opportunity to help other youth and community members in all areas of the city. This teaches the youth to "reach out" and experience the inner-satisfaction of helping others.
11.	**Supportive Services**	This program provides services on an as-needs basis. Youth are provided with services such as child care, transportation, and help in understanding such things as rental agreements, bank statements, resume writing, etc.
12.	**Abstinence Education**	This program promotes sexual abstinence until marriage while emphasizing abstinence from drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
13.	**Alternative Sentencing for Youthful Offenders and Restorative Justice**	This program serves the community by providing a structured alternative for juvenile offenders that frees up the courts and probation officers to concentrate on the most serious offenses. This program assists youth in developing empathy for their victims and enables them to make reparations and restitution, and realize a new direction in life.
14.	**Transition and Reentry Program for Juvenile and Youthful Offenders**	This program provides ex-offenders with a structured plan to transition back into the community from incarceration. HOPE staff attend and take an active role in multidisciplinary team meetings (MDTs) at the state prison and youth facilities and design aftercare plans for these youth.
15.	**Fatherhood Initiative**	This program offers a 12-month curriculum that addresses the national problem of fatherlessness. Bonding with their child/children, attending workshops that promote inward positive change and improved parenting skills, and lasting behavioral modification are the focuses of this initiative.
16.	**Motherhood Initiative**	This program offers group support; workshops in parenting, budget, and lifestyle management; and encourages and provides assistance to teen mothers so they may continue their education.

Appendix B: Completed Evaluation Standards Checklist

Checklist for Applying the Standards

To interpret the information provided on this form, the reader needs to refer to the full text of the standards as they appear in Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, *The Program Evaluation Standards* (1994), Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

The Standards were consulted and used as indicated in the table below (check as appropriate):

Descriptor		The Standard was addressed	The Standard was partially addressed	The Standard was not addressed	The Standard was not applicable
U1	Stakeholder Identification	X			
U2	Evaluator Credibility	X			
U3	Information Scope and Selection	X			
U4	Values Identification	X			
U5	Report Clarity	X			
U6	Report Timeliness and Dissemination	X			
U7	Evaluation Impact	X			
F1	Practical Procedures	X			
F2	Political Viability	X			
F3	Cost Effectiveness	X			
P1	Service Orientation	X			
P2	Formal Agreements	X			
P3	Rights of Human Subjects	X			
P4	Human Interactions	X			
P5	Complete and Fair Assessment	X			
P6	Disclosure of Findings	X			
P7	Conflict of Interest	X			
P8	Fiscal Responsibility	X			
A1	Program Documentation	X			
A2	Context Analysis	X			
A3	Described Purposes and Procedures	X			
A4	Defensible Information Sources	X			
A5	Valid Information	X			
A6	Reliable Information	X			
A7	Systematic Information	X			
A8	Analysis of Quantitative Information	X			
A9	Analysis of Qualitative Information	X			
A10	Justified Conclusions	X			
A11	Impartial Reporting	X			
A12	Metaevaluation	X			

The Program Evaluation Standards (1994, Sage) guided the development of this (check one):

____ request for evaluation plan/design/proposal
____ evaluation plan/design/proposal
____ evaluation contract
_X_ evaluation report
____ other: _____

Name Kimberly S. Cowley Date June 5, 2003

Kimberly S. Cowley
(signature)

Position or Title Research and Evaluation Specialist

Agency AEL

Address P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325

Relation to Document Co-author
(e.g., author of document, evaluation team leader, external auditor, internal auditor)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix C: Interview Protocols

AEL Group Interview Protocol
for Faith-Based Staff

Hello, I'm Kim Cowley from AEL. AEL is working with the HOPE program in order to determine how well it is achieving its goals of helping youth and to determine how other faith-based agencies can meet similar needs. Today I'd like to get your input regarding your participation in the HOPE program.

There are a couple of "ground rules" to mention before we get started. There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone may not agree with each other, and that's fine. We want each person's true perceptions of their involvement; these perceptions may be positive, negative, or both. And, your answers are voluntary; if you don't want to respond to a particular item, that's okay. I'll be taking notes throughout our discussion. In any written summaries, no one will be identified by name.

1. How would you describe the HOPE program? (i.e., what it is and what it offers)

2. Describe your involvement with HOPE. (i.e., length, why, current role)

3. What are the main strengths of the HOPE program? (i.e., what works best for participants)

4. What are the main weaknesses of HOPE program? (i.e., what do you think is least effective)

5. How is the HOPE program different from other tutoring/mentoring programs? (i.e., staffing, faith aspect, focus, operations, personal growth)

6. Describe the involvement of family members of youth involved in HOPE activities.

7. What suggestions would you make for improving the HOPE program?

8. What value do you place on HOPE's involvement with AEL in impacting at-risk youth?

9. What could AEL do to improve its services in working with the HOPE program?

10. What type of technical assistance do you feel is needed for other faith-based organizations to design and implement programs that support the educational attainment of at-risk youth?

Cowley, 10/11/02

AEL Student Group Interview Protocol
for HOPE Youth Development Movement

Welcome. I am Kim Cowley from AEL. AEL is working with HOPE in order to determine how well it is achieving its goals of helping youth and to determine how other faith-based agencies can meet similar needs. We're wanting your input regarding your participation in the HOPE program.

There are a couple of "ground rules" to mention. There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone may not agree with each other, and that's fine. We want each person's true perceptions of their involvement; these perceptions may be positive, negative, or both. And, your answers are voluntary; if you don't want to respond to a particular item, that's okay. I'll be taking notes throughout our discussion, but in any written summaries, no one will be identified by name.

1. Describe the types of HOPE activities in which you have participated.
   (i.e., what, when, where, how many)

2. How did you get involved with HOPE?
   (i.e., who referred you and why)

3. Describe how the HOPE program operates.
   (i.e., how do you receive services, what type of paperwork is required from you)

4. What are the main strengths of the HOPE program?
   (i.e., what do you like the most, what works best)

5. What are the benefits you are gaining from the HOPE program?
   (i.e., short- or long-term, what keeps you participating)

6. What are the main weaknesses of HOPE program?
   (i.e., what do you like the least, what doesn't work)

7. How is the HOPE program different from other tutoring/mentoring programs?
   (i.e., staffing, faith aspect, focus, operations, personal growth)

8. Describe the involvement of your family members in HOPE activities.

9. What suggestions would you make for improving the HOPE program?

10. Other comments you'd like to make concerning your participation in the HOPE program.

Cowley, 5/23/02

AEL Parent Group Interview Protocol
for HOPE Youth Development Movement

I am Kim Cowley from AEL, which is working with HOPE in order to determine how well it is achieving its goal of helping youth and to determine how other faith-based agencies can meet similar needs. We're wanting your input regarding your child's participation in the HOPE program.

There are a couple of ground rules to mention. There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone may not agree with each other, and that's fine. We want each person's true perceptions; these may be positive, negative, or both. And, your answers are voluntary; if you don't want to respond to a particular item, that's okay. I'll be taking notes throughout our discussion but no one will be identified by name in our written summaries.

1. How did your child get involved with HOPE?
   (i.e., who referred and why)

2. Describe how the HOPE program operates.
   (i.e., how does your child [or family] receive services, what type of paperwork is required)

3. Describe the types of HOPE activities in which your child (or family) has participated.
   (i.e., what, when, where, how many)

4. What are the main strengths of the HOPE program?
   (i.e., what do you like the most, what works best)

5. What are the benefits your child (or family) is gaining from the HOPE program?
   (i.e., short- or long-term, what keeps him/her participating)

6. What are the main weaknesses of HOPE program?
   (i.e., what do you like the least, what doesn't work)

7. How is the HOPE program different from other tutoring/mentoring programs?
   (i.e., staffing, faith aspect, focus, operations, personal growth)

8. What suggestions would you make for improving the HOPE program?

Cowley, 11/14/02

Appendix D: AEL Skills Inventory

AEL Skills Inventory*

Identification Number

SSN		Home#		Day born	
⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪	⓪
①	①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

The AEL Skills Inventory is composed of 70 items that focus on skills that individuals may or may not possess. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Its purpose is to help you learn about your own skills.

Please fill in your "Identification Number" to the right. This number ensures anonymity and is easy to generate. It consists of the last two digits of your Social Security Number (SSN), the last two digits of your home phone number (00 if no home phone), and the two digits for the day of the month on which you were born (01-31).

When completing this survey, please fill in bubbles completely. **Like this:** ● **Not this:** ⊘ ✓

Indicate your gender and grade level.

		O 5th	O 8th	O 11th	
O	Female	O 6th	O 9th	O 12th	
O	Male	O 7th	O 10th	O Postsec.	

Read each item and decide how often you possess that particular skill. Using a scale of 1 (*Almost Never*) to 5 (*Almost Always*), fill in the bubble that best represents your choice.

Confidence

		Almost Never		. . .		*Almost Always*
1.	I am entitled to my own opinion.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	I can state my opinion when others disagree.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	I can identify my weaknesses.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	I can accept constructive criticism.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	I feel comfortable in most situations.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6.	I can take a stand when the going gets rough.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	I like to face my problems head on.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	I can resist when other people impose on me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	I can insist that others respect my rights.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10.	I can identify my strengths.	①	②	③	④	⑤

*Most items adapted from the *Leadership Skills Inventory*, Karnes & Chauvin, 1985.

© 2002 by AEL. All rights reserved.

5/17/02

Written Communications

Almost Never . . . Almost Always

11. I can write my ideas so others understand them. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
12. I can distinguish fact from opinion in writing. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
13. I can compare and contrast ideas in writing. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
14. I can summarize written information. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
15. I know how to use written information. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
16. I can write to persuade others to my viewpoint. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
17. I can write a speech. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
18. I can evaluate my writing. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
19. I can prepare an agenda for a meeting. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
20. I can write an outline. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Oral Communications

Almost Never . . . Almost Always

21 I can speak in a clear manner. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
22. I can express a group's ideas. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
23. I can orally defend my viewpoint. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
24. I can deliver a prepared speech to a group. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
25. I can moderate panel discussions. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
26. I can use effective body language as I speak. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
27. I am sincere when speaking. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
28. I can deliver a speech spontaneously. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
29. I can tell others how I feel. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
30. I can effectively listen to others. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Values

Almost Never . . . Almost Always

31. I have a set of personal standards. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
32. I recognize the important things in my life. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
33. I am loyal to those closest to me. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
34. I can accept other people's ideas. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
35. I do what I say I will. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
36. I try to deal honestly with others. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
37. I can accept other people's values. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
38. I try to respect the feelings of others. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
39. I understand my own feelings. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
40. I treat other people fairly. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Decision Making

Almost Never . . . Almost Always

41. I can gather facts for decision making. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
42. I can analyze facts before making a decision. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
43. I am aware of how my decisions affect others. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
44. I know how to reach logical conclusions. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
45. I can reach decisions on my own. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
46. I can accept that my decisions may not be popular. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
47. I can support group decisions, even if I don't agree. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
48. I can make accurate decisions quickly. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
49. I understand decision making skills. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
50. I can accept advice from others. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Problem Solving

Almost Never . . . Almost Always

51. I know the elements of problem solving. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
52. I know what to do as a leader in solving problems. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
53. I can identify a problem. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
54. I can develop different ways to solve problems. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
55. I can select the best way to solve a problem. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
56. I can judge how effective my strategy is. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
57. I can make people feel safe expressing their ideas. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
58. I can resolve conflicts within a group. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
59. I can work effectively for a compromise. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
60. I can distinguish between influence and manipulation. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Planning

Almost Never . . . Almost Always

61. I have organizational skills. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
62. I set reachable goals for myself. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
63. I seek advice when necessary. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
64. I can tell what is needed to accomplish goals. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
65. I can set realistic deadlines. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
66. I can accept change. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
67. I can meet deadlines. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
68. I can determine whether goals are completed. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
69. I am not overwhelmed by details. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
70. I can set objectives to help achieve my goals. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Appendix E: Satisfaction Survey

Satisfaction Survey

The Satisfaction Survey is composed of 12 items that focus on your satisfaction with the HOPE Youth Development Movement. There are no right or wrong answers. Its purpose is to help HOPE staff understand what is working well, what might need to be changed, and your satisfaction with services received.

1. What school do you attend?

O	Capital High	O	Riverside High
O	George Washington High	O	Sissonville High
O	Herbert Hoover High	O	South Charleston High
O	Nitro High	O	St. Albans High

2. Select all of the HOPE services you have received this year.

O	Character Education/Leadership Dev.	O	Tutoring/Mentoring
O	Field Trips/Enrichment Opportunities	O	Career Awareness Workshops
O	Postsecondary Education Awareness	O	College Preparation
O	Youth Entrepreneurship Training	O	Abstinence Education
O	Workforce Investment Act Initiative	O	Job Referral
O	Alternative Sentencing for Juv. Offenders	O	Intervention for Juv. Off.
O	Transition/Re-entry for Juv. Offenders	O	Truancy Diversion

Read each item and rate your level of satisfaction for the HOPE services you received this year. Using a scale of 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 5 (*Very Satisfied*), fill in the bubble that best represents your choice.

	Very Dissat.		. . .		*Very Sat.*
3. The quality of HOPE services I received.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. The appropriateness for my situation(s).	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. The extent to which the services met my needs.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. The efficiency of delivered services.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. Extent to which I acquired new skills/knowledge.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. The extent to which I improved academically.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9. The extent to which I grew spiritually.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10. Extent to which HOPE positively impacted my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤

11. What do you like most about HOPE?

12. What do you like least about HOPE?

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").